

The Ethics of Cross-Cultural Counseling in VR

TACE Region V
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What are Ethics?

Webster's dictionary:

- A set of moral principles or values
- The principles of conduct governing an individual or group

Values

- The VR Professional and Customer have deeply held values and beliefs that influence both case direction and case decision making
- Cross-cultural counseling highlights potential value differences



Putting Yourself in Someone Else's Shoes



- Is the power equal in a relationship between student and VR professional?
- Why is it important to understand the student's perspective?

Alan the Atheist

- Alan is a caring and empathetic Counselor who is not at all religious. He meets his new client, who is a recent immigrant to the U.S. and from a devout religious group. The client states, "I will always pray at the start of each visit so that you will be divinely guided. Will you pray with me as we start this session?"

"Never let your sense of morals get in the way of doing what's right."

Issac Asimov

Native American Quiz

True or False

American Indians:

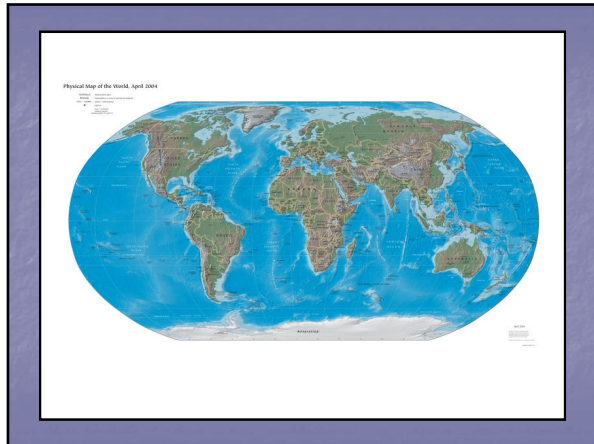
- Do not like to make eye contact with people they do not know well.
- Treat all persons older than themselves with the respect they give to their elders.
- Give gifts in kind for services or other acts of kindness they receive.
- Treat members of their tribes who live off the reservation with the same honor as those who live on the reservation.
- Treat members of other tribes in the same way they treat members of their own tribes.
- Experience Diabetes and alcoholism at higher rates than the general public.

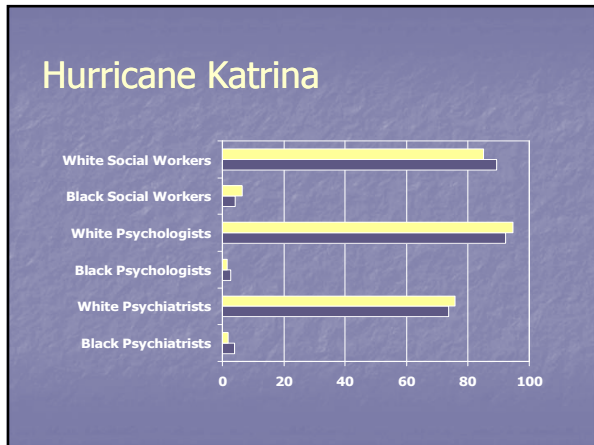
Multiple Choice

- There are more than
 - 150
 - 250
 - 350native languages spoken today in the United states.
- There are more than
 - 130
 - 230
 - 330federally recognized tribes in the U.S.
- There are more than
 - 75
 - 125
 - 225federally recognized Native entities in Alaska

Multiple Choice

- According to a 1997 study, the leading cause of death for American Indians and Alaska Natives was
 - Diabetes
 - Alcoholism
 - Homicide
 - Heart Disease
- The preferred term for Native decedents of the U.S. is
 - Native American
 - American Indian
 - The name of the individual's tribe being referred to such as Navajo, Cheyenne, Chippewa ect.
 - All of the above
 - None of the above





Effective Cross Cultural Communicators

- ❖ Demonstrates **RESPECT** for individuals from other cultures
- ❖ Makes continued and sincere attempts to understand the world from other points of view
- ❖ Is open to new learning
 - ❖ Knows how to build "toolbox"
- ❖ Has a sense of humor
- ❖ Tolerates ambiguity well

Sahra

- Sahra is a recent immigrant from Somalia. She wears the traditional Muslim dress of Head scarf and clothing that covers her from neck to foot. Sahra is very withdrawn and has been taunted at times because of her clothing. She has missed 2 appointments with you this month. It is the holy month of Ramadan.

Terrance

- Terrance is the only black student in his class. While he has a few close friends, Terrance faces frequent attacks, both verbal and physical, because of the color of his skin. These attacks occur both within and outside of school. Today Terrance comes to you requesting he be referred to a doctor for medication to help treat anxiety.

Native Yearnings

- You are working with Charlie. Charlie is a young man with traumatic brain injury. Charlie lives off the reservation but his family maintains a close connection with their tribal community. Lately Charlie has been demonstrating more than average (for him) agitation. His family wants Charlie to see a medicine man and is not interested in pursuing western style care.

Juanita

- Juanita is a 18-year-old Latino woman moved with her family from Mexico six years ago. Last year, Juanita lost her arm in a factory accident. Juanita lives with her family, currently receives SSI, and has been pre-determined eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation. She attends her first planning session with her family (father, mother, sister, brother, and elderly aunt.) Juanita does not speak English, and has chosen her brother to interpret for her.

- Well into the planning session it becomes evident to you that Juanita is not the person doing the majority of the speaking. The family is having a good deal of discussion in response to each question you ask. You also get the impression that the brother may not be accurately translating disability related information you are providing, and may not be exactly reporting Juanita's comments to you.

- It is very clear that Juanita's choice for interpreter is indeed her brother, the only family English speaker. The choice for interpreter is the only choice you are certain of however. Juanita spends much of the appointment looking toward the ground, being relatively silent, while her family generates much discussion. The brother tells you that Juanita chooses a career in childcare for Latino children, (we will assume there are such positions in your community) and requests your assistance in obtaining a position in this field.

Juanita Conclusion

- How do you proceed? (There are no multi-lingual counselors in your office, so don't even think of transferring this case...)
- What assumptions might you make about the families behavior?
- How will you handle confidential material?
- How do you assure choice?
- What are the possible cultural considerations?

Salma

- You are working with Salma, a young woman from Afghanistan who is accompanied by her parents to all meetings. Salma and her mother only speak when spoken to, and often refer to the father to answer for them. The father wants the daughter to become a nurse. During the session Salma agrees with this choice. Between sessions however Salma contacts you and states that she has no interest in becoming a nurse that she would prefer to be a chemist.

- The daughter will not share this information with her father for fear this will be disrespectful. You learn from the client that she comes from a culture where it is not at all unusual for fathers to choose the careers of their daughters and wives. She tells you that she is giving you this information in confidence and does not want it shared with her father.

Salma Conclusion

- Do you continue working with Salma on a Plan that she has no interest in?
- Do you assist Salma with her interest in becoming an engineer and risk demonstrating disrespect for her father and disregard a cultural practice?
- What are the cultural considerations?
- What are the ethical considerations?
- What if your client had the same issue, but did not have a cultural difference?

Chao

- Chao is of Hmong decent, and immigrated to this country 4 years ago with her family. She has been diagnosed with PTSD and seems very unmotivated to work with the transition team. Last week she was sent to a factory that produces clothing to research employment opportunities. Chao left the meeting crying.

Middle Class Values in the U.S.

- Importance of individualism and privacy
- Belief in the equality of all individuals
- Informality in interactions with others
- Emphasis on the future, change, and progress
- Belief in the general goodness of humanity
- Emphasis on the importance of punctuality
- High regard for achievement, action, work, and materialism
- Pride in styles that are direct and assertive

Roessler, Richard T., and Stanford E. Rubin;
Case Management and Rehabilitation Counseling.
Pro-Ed publishing, Austin Texas, 1998 (P. 185)
